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COMIC SHOP NEWS™

DAMSELS

Damsels Deals Up Grim Fairy Tales

Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, the Little Mermaid, Snow White... all very familiar to anyone who's enjoyed the Disney animated classics over the years. However, there's a lot more to these characters than those movies might lead you to believe... as readers are about to see in ***Damsels,*** a new series by *Leah Moore, John Reppion,* and *Aneke.*

"We are thoroughly enchanted to be working on such a spell-binding series," *Leah Moore* said. "It's fantastic fun for us as writers to be able to play with characters and concepts that are familiar, but then put our own Moore & Reppion style spin on things. Yes, there *are* Damsels—and yes, there will be *plenty* of distress... but nothing is how it seems, and there is brutal action and weird surprises at every turn. We have had so much fun writing this, and we are so pleased with the art team Dynamite have set us up with. We can't wait to see it in print."

"***Damsels*** is set in a world where fairy tales are real," *John Reppion* explained. "The stories we all know from Grimm, Andersen, etc, are the past, present and future of the place and its populace. However, we find that things don't seem to be playing out as expected – 'happily ever after' seems more complicated than the stories suggested.

"At the beginning of the story, the three great kingdoms of Perrault on the Western coast, Caumont in the eastern mountains, and Villeneuve in the central forests are about to enter into an historic and significant alliance. In issue one, we have Queen Talia (Sleeping Beauty) and her husband King Aurore arriving from Perrault in Caumont to meet with that territory's rulers, King Persine and Queen Rapunzel, to set the compact in motion. Into the middle of this momentous union stumbles curious a tattooed wanderer called Rapa, and events begin to take an unexpected turn."

If the names Talia, Persine, and Rapa seem less than familiar—well, there's a reason. "So far as coming out and saying which characters we're using," Reppion said, "we don't want to give too much away to begin with because we want the readers to have all the fun of 'Is that...? Did she...? Does that mean...?' as and when we reveal the characters."

The character list and concept may sound Disney-esque, but what readers will find in these pages goes far beyond what one might see in a Disney feature. "Well, Disney are a lot more self-aware now, I supposed," Reppion said, "but in terms of the 'classic' Disney images of the fairy tale princesses, we're coming at this from the opposite angle to all of that stuff. At the same time, we're not jumping in and trying to subvert or rip up the Disney stuff just for the sake of it—we're just taking the source material and jumping off from there, creating our own world and rules."

While ***Damsels*** sounds like a Moore and Reppion concept through and through, it turns out that the book and its premise were in development before the writing duo came on board. "The idea of ***Damsels*** and the name have been around the Dynamite offices for at least two years," publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "When we originally talked about it, we wanted Leah and John to write the series, but their schedule at the time did not allow. They had existing commitments and were working on projects outside of comics. After much discussion, we were fortunate, as we decided to wait until they could fit it into their schedule—and that was the best decision in the world. They are really writing a smart script for the story."

It seems that a number of Dynamite's strongest concepts have germinated in the editorial offices. When the editorial staff is pitching ideas for development, are they matching concepts and creators, or is the concept developed first and then opened up for pitches from potential writers? "It is a two way street with the creators we work with," Barrucci said. "Many times when the concepts are started internally, we contact creators for either pitches or feedback and see what they come back with for the story. Of course, it helps when a creators enjoy the concept and are passionate about the series. Leah and John were very excited, reviewed our internal notes, and they came back with a really well structured overview and pacing for the series. They just get it—they understood what we were trying to achieve from the get-go, and we're very happy that they're on board."

Reppion and Moore are going far beyond the more bowdlerized and simplified versions of these characters that have become a part of popular culture. "We know from working on books like ***The Complete Dracula*** and ***The Complete Alice*** how easy it is for us as culture consumers to end up thinking we know a character or a story inside out, without realizing that we're actually only familiar with an *nth* generation, abridged, sanitized, made-for-TV version of it. Big chunks of these old stories get written out, and it's almost always the weirdest bits that are the longest gone. It's been fun going back to the sources and seeing just how bizarre some of the original fairy tales really are. There are also a lot of stories that, at first glance, you don't think you've ever read or heard—but then these familiar themes and scenes start to emerge."

While the character list may sound all-ages, Barrucci stresses that this is strong stuff. "***Damsels*** is written in the tradition of the classic stories it draws from. This is *not* a watered down take on these classic characters. Leah and John are drawing on the light and dark that is inherent in them. ***Damsels*** is for every reader who enjoys a rich story with a dash of the unsettling thrown in for good measure.

Did Moore and Reppion decide which characters would appear in the series, or was the cast set by Dynamite before the writers came on board? "Dynamite has given us almost complete freedom with the characters and the series as a whole," Reppion said. "They had some really interesting initial ideas and have allowed us to build things up from there. There will definitely be more fairy tale heroines in upcoming issues, and plenty of other characters, too—some major, some minor, some blink-and-you'll-miss-them."

Reppion and Moore have kept a lower profile for the past year or so before returning with ***Damsels;*** where did they go, and what was it about the project that convinced them to leap back in again. "We have actually been non-stop for over a year now on ***Damsels,"*** Moore said, "and on our 150-page online enhanced comic www.thethrillelectric.com , on a new adaptation book from Self Made Hero, and other bits and bobs.

"This last eighteen months have been crazy busy, we did the work mentioned above, moved house, and kept pitching like mad for other work all the while. We had every intention of continuing in this fashion, but then we discovered I was pregnant again, and this time it was twins! The last nine months have been insane trying to get all our work done before they arrived—and to be frank, we still have tons left to do. Don't worry though: ***Damsels*** will keep coming out throughout all Moore & Reppion family fun!"

When readers hear that *Alan Moore's* daughter is working on a series that presents a new, more complex and sophisticated take on classic characters, there will be inevitable comparisons made between *Leah Moore* and *Alan Moore's* work. When she took the project, did Leah anticipate some comparisons to what Alan has done with ***Lost Girls, LoEG,*** etc? For that matter, is there any similarity beyond the superficial—and do the comparisons bother her at all? "Of course that comparison will be made," Moore said, "but then it already has with our ***Witchblade/Dorian Grey*** crossover, and then our takes on ***Dracula, Alice in Wonderland,*** and ***Sherlock Holmes.*** People have noticed that we seem to be playing in the same territory as some of Dad's work, but it's never our intention to be 'AlanMooreLite,' it's just a fun thing to do. He was far from the first writer to say 'fictional characters are real and in the same universe as each other' and certainly won't be the last. *Kim Newman's* ***Anno Dracula*** did it before Dad, *Philip Jose Farmer* did it—it's a way of letting your readers wallow about in their own knowledge of the characters, and let them enjoy the little references when they see them.

"I don't mind if people compare ***Damsels*** to ***League,*** or to ***Lost Girls,*** but the only similarity is the use of several existing characters, beyond that they are totally different. I'm hoping readers will be more interested in what we have to say, and how we say it, than these similarities of form."

If ***Damsels*** does well, Reppion and Moore have plenty of plans to revisit the concept. "There's a whole world and its populace to play with, so we'd love to explore ***Damsels*** more after this first run," Reppion said.

"Right now, our biggest focus is to put this out and to do it well," Barrucci added. "Would we like to do other fairy-tale-based series? *Absolutely!* But we have to see if the market reacts well to our first series first."

Damsels #1, a $3.99 comic, is scheduled for late September release. The book will be offered in a standard edition with cover art by *J. Scott Campbell* there will also be a 1-for-15 Campbell black-and-white incentive cover, a 1-for-25 Campbell virgin incentive cover, and a 1-for-50 *Sean Chen* black and white variant cover.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

The following comics and comics-related books are tentatively slated for release on the dates given, based on the latest information provided by the publishers at press-time. If no date is listed, the books are scheduled for release sometime in the month of August. Diamond Comic Distributors' code numbers are included for ease of ordering.

•**2000 AD #1794** 8/1 Rebellion JUN121251 $5.25
•**2000 AD #1795** 8/8 Rebellion JUN121252 $5.25
•**2000 AD #1796** 8/15 Rebellion JUN121253 $5.25
•**2000 AD #1797** 8/22 Rebellion JUN121254 $5.25
•**2000 AD #1798** 8/29 Rebellion JUN121255 $5.25
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What is the horrific secret behind The Forgotten Superman? What happens when Superman is too late to save Lois Lane? Grant Morrison answers those questions here!
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•**ADVENTURE TIME: MARCELINE SCREAM QUEENS #2** 8/29 Boom JUN120946 $3.99
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•**ALABASTER WOLVES #5 (OF 5)** 8/15 Dark Horse JUN120019 $3.50
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•**AMERICAN VAMPIRE #30** 8/29 Vertigo/DC JUN120278 $2.99
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Comics stories about cartoonists by Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Jack Cole, Dick Briefer, Winsor McCay, Chester Gould, Sheldon Mayer, Milton Caniff, Ernie Bushmiller, Basil Wolverton, Siegel and Shuster, Will Eisner, Elzie Segar, Harvey Kurtzman, and more
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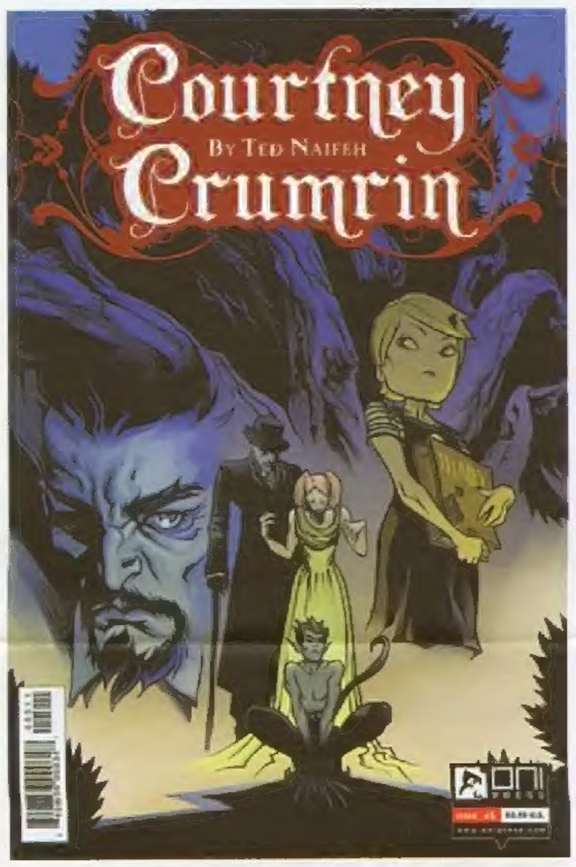

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Nelson/Murdock no more! Foggy's discovered a secret Matt's been keeping—and he doesn't take it well!
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•**DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #1** 8/8 Marvel JUN120665 $4.99
Written and illustrated by Alan Davis
•**DARK AVENGERS #179** 8/15 Marvel JUN120613 $2.99
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Arvid Nelson's critically acclaimed Rex Mundi returns, and Neal Adams kicks off a new chapter of Blood
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•**DC UNIVERSE ONLINE LEGENDS TP VOL 3** 8/8 DC MAY120286 $24.99
•**DC UNIVERSE PRESENTS #12** 8/15 DC JUN120157 $2.99
Kid Flash stars in his first solo adventure
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•**DEADPOOL CLASSIC TP VOL 7** 8/29 Marvel JUN120741 $29.99
•**DEADPOOL KILLS THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #1 (OF 4)** 8/1 Marvel JUN120700 $2.99
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•**DEADPOOL KILLS THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #4 (OF 4)** 8/22 Marvel JUN120703 $2.99
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•**DEADWORLD: WAR OF THE DEAD #3 (OF 5)** 8/15 IDW JUN120334 $3.99
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Batman Vs. Black Mask
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•**DIABLO #5 (OF 5)** 8/29 DC JUN120268 $2.99

I'M SORRY I DEFENDED JERICHO BRAND AGAINST YOU, PETER—BUT HE DID TRY TO PROTECT ME FROM THAT MANIAC CLOWN-9.
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 7-3
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BESIDES, IF I SIDED WITH SPIDER-MAN, IT MIGHT HAVE MADE HIM SUSPICIOUS.
WELL, WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...
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Abyss has arrived! Can the newest Dialer - or anyone - stop him?
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Francis Manapul & Brian Buccellato set up The Rogue as a team as the next major storyline for the series begins
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The Rogues - victorious? If the Flash had trouble with them individually, together they'll kill him! But something worse than The Rogues is just waiting for the right moment to attack....
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•**FLASH OMNIBUS BY GEOFF JOHNS HC VOL 3** 8/29 DC APR120254 $75.00
Collects The Flash #s 201-225 & Wonder Woman #214

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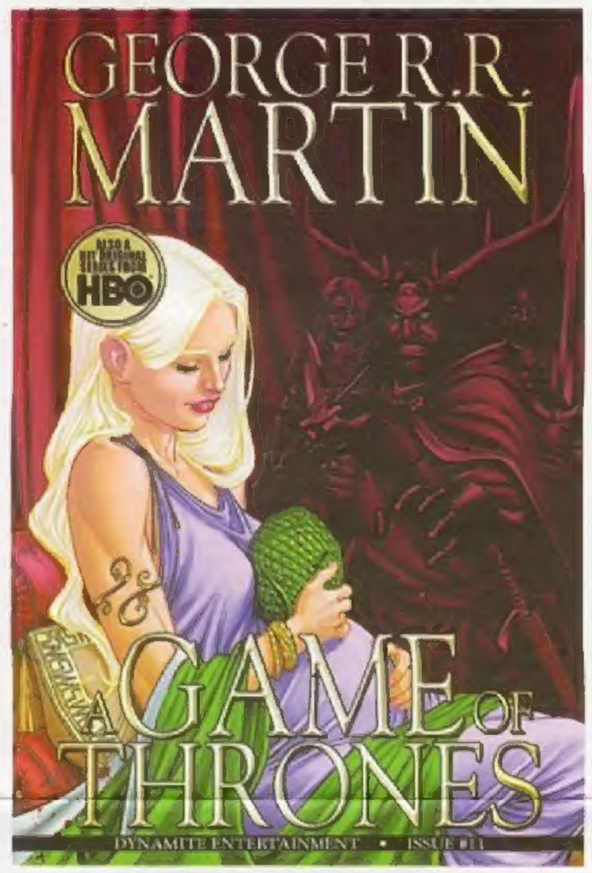
James Asmus & Clay Mann launch an ongoing Gambit series
•**GAMBIT #2** 8/29 Marvel JUN120683 $2.99



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•**HELLBLAZER #294** 8/15 Vertigo/DC JUN120276 $2.99
•**HELLRAISER #17** 8/29 Boom JUN120914 $3.99
•**HELLRAISER MASTERPIECES TP VOL 2** 8/29 Boom JUN120916 $19.99
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•**HERO WORSHIP #2 (OF 6)** Avatar JUN120860 $3.99
•**HIGHER EARTH #4** 8/29 Boom JUN120929 $3.99
•**HITMAN TP VOL 7: CLOSING TIME** 8/1 DC MAY120294 $29.99
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A teenage boy learns that the mysterious amnesiac girl who just showed up in town disappeared ten years earlier from the house where he now lives... and now she's back with strange abilities and ominous secrets
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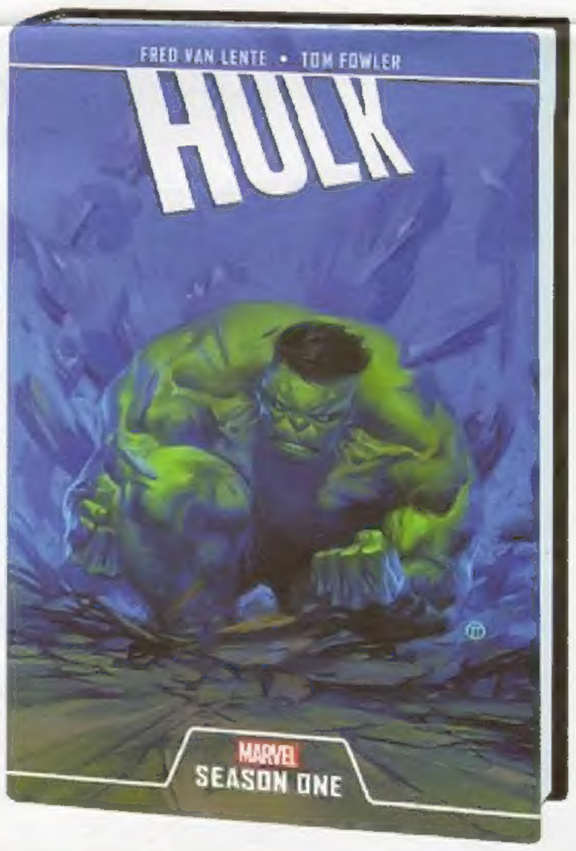
•**HOUSE OF MYSTERY TP VOL 8: DESOLATION** 8/1 Vertigo/DC MAY120324 $14.99
•**HULK #56** 8/15 Marvel JUN120641 $2.99
•**HULK #57** 8/29 Marvel JUN120642 $2.99
•**HULK SEASON ONE PREMIUM HC** 8/8 Marvel MAY120746 $24.99
Fred Van Lente & Tom Fowler retell the origin and early exploits of the Hulk



WHY WERE YOU SO MAD AT ME BEFORE?
IT'S NOT YOU, HONEY. IT'S—THAT JERICHO GUY!
ALL HIS CO-STARS SEEM TO FALL FOR HIM--AND NOW YOU'RE HIS LEADING LADY!
ONLY ON STAGE, TIGER!
I'M YOUR LEADING LADY—NOW AND ALWAYS!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 7-4
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•**I DON'T LIKE YOU AT ALL BIG BROTHER GN COLLECTED EDITION VOL 1** 8/8 Seven Seas MAY121272 $16.99
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Andrew Bennett's hold over the vampires is about to collapse as Stormwatch attacks.
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David Schwartz & Micah Gunnell explore what a real world filled with superheroes might look like—and the centerpiece of the series is the superhero reality show Superhero Idol
•**IKIGAMI ULTIMATE LIMIT GN VOL 8** 8/22 Viz MAY121344 $12.99
•**INCREDIBLE HULK #12** 8/8 Marvel JUN120643 $3.99
Hulk vs. Wolverine and Hulk vs. Thing
•**INCREDIBLE ROCKHEAD GN VOL 1: ROCK PAPER SCISSORLEGZ** Capstone MAY121015 $8.95
Whenever Chip Stone's in danger, he's instantly transformed into a hulking beast with a giant head of rock
•**INDIE COMICS MAGAZINE #6** Aazurn JUN120752 $6.49
•**INFECTED #2 (OF 5)** 8/29 IDW JUN120390 $3.99
•**INFERNAL MAN-THING #3 (OF 3)** 8/29 Marvel JUN120650 $3.99
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•**INTRINSIC #3** Arcana JUN120791 $1.99
•**INU YASHA VIZBIG ED GN VOL 12** 8/15 Viz MAY121332 $17.99
•**INVINCIBLE #95** 8/8 Image JUN120558 $2.99
•**INVINCIBLE IRON MAN #522** 8/1 Marvel JUN120651 $3.99
•**INVINCIBLE IRON MAN #523** 8/22 Marvel JUN120652 $3.99
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Collects all three volumes of Grant Morrison's Invisibles in one volume
•**IRON MAN PREMIUM HC REVENGE OF MANDARIN** 8/1 Marvel MAR120653 $34.99
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•**IRRESISTIBLE #3 (OF 4)** Zenescope JUN121383 $3.99
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STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 7-5

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THOSE TV GUYS SURE GOT SOME GOOD FOOTAGE OF YOU FIGHTING CLOWN-9!
GOTTA ADMIT— HE MADE ME LOOK LIKE THE CLOWN!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 7-6
BUT THE NEXT TIME WE TANGLE— I'LL WIPE THAT PAINTED SMILE OFF HIS FACE!
JUST BE CAREFUL, HONEY! HE MAY BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN HE LOOKS!
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•**SUICIDE SQUAD #12** 8/8 DC JUN120216 $2.99
The Squad's traitor is revealed
•**SUPER DINOSAUR #13** 8/8 Image JUN120575 $2.99
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There's a monster hiding in the shadows of New York after dark, and she's set her sights on Superboy
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•**SUPERCROOKS #4 (OF 4)** 8/22 Marvel APR120683 $2.99
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Supergirl confronts Superman in his Fortress of Solitude about the Bottle City of Kandor
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The entity that came from the bottom of the ocean in issue #9 is back - and it's trying to create a dimensional gateway for his army!
•**SUPERMAN ANNUAL #1** 8/29 DC JUN120170 $4.99
Abducted by a group of mysterious aliens, Superman is dragged to a remote alien galaxy to take part in a world hopping game of cat-and-mouse where players are hunted for sport
•**SUPERMAN FAMILY ADVENTURES #4** 8/29 DC JUN120262 $2.99
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Collects the miniseries by Brian Wood
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Written and illustrated by Alan Davis
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Wonder Woman faces a choice: Defend Zeus's throne from Apollo - or defend her closest friend!
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Calie and Violet find themselves in a strange town where the townspeople are overcome by homicidal rages whose source comes from the very place that Calie has spent a life time trying to escape
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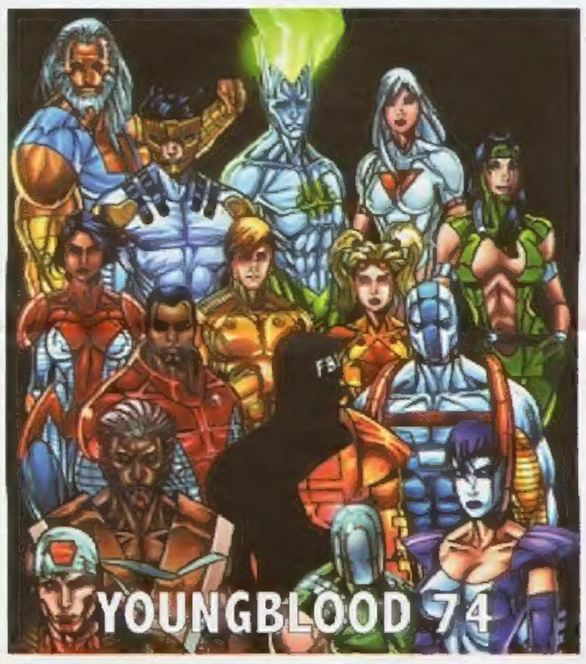

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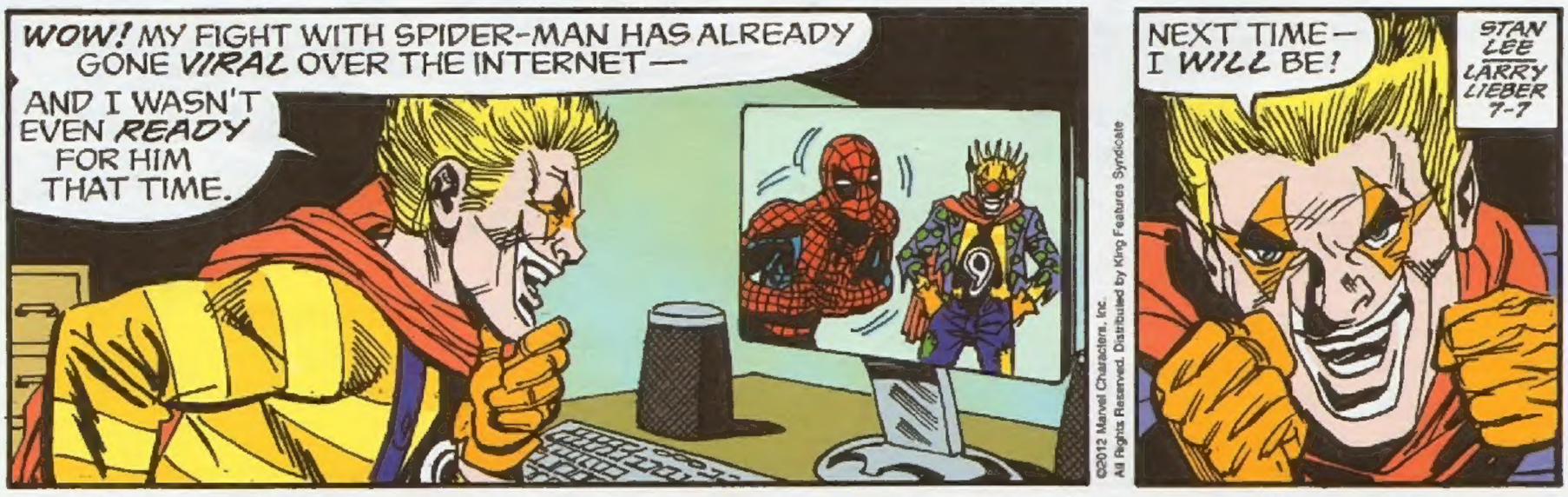
WOW! MY FIGHT WITH SPIDER-MAN HAS ALREADY GONE VIRAL OVER THE INTERNET—
AND I WASN'T EVEN READY FOR HIM THAT TIME.
NEXT TIME— I WILL BE!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 7-7
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"My heart is steadfast, I will sing and make music. Awake, my soul!"

— Psalm 57:7

Punk Rock Jesus

Written & Illustrated by

SEAN MURPHY

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